

House Families, Children, and Seniors Committee

February 6, 2013

Chairman Kurtz, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and your committee members about the private nonprofit charities represented by the Michigan Federation for Children and Families. I will also speak to the challenges and opportunities facing Michigan's child welfare system. My name is Janet Reynolds Snyder and I am the Federation's Executive Director. This year, our association celebrates its 44th year of actively providing vital services for vulnerable children and families in Michigan.

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families is a membership association of private, nonprofit child and family serving agencies located throughout the entire state of Michigan.

Our member agencies provide a wide array of services in all 83 counties of the state to the families in your districts. The Federation's 43 member agencies provide family preservation services, foster care, adoption, and residential care. The Federation's member agencies are pleased to work in shared responsibility with the Michigan Department of Human Services, Department of Community Health, the Courts and our State Legislature to provide these vital services.

Your commitment to the most vulnerable children of Michigan has never been more important as our state's child welfare system is undergoing a critical reform process. The decisions made on a daily basis by this committee and others directly impact the lives of children and their families.

To fulfill the state's responsibility to provide for the protection, care and supervision of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect DHS enlists the expertise and resources of numerous licensed and accredited private agencies throughout the state. This partnership with DHS is long-standing and critical to serving the needs of vulnerable children and families.

Through contracts with the state, currently Federation member agencies deliver nearly 45% of the direct service to children in licensed out-of-home foster care placements, and more than 90% of residential treatment services and adoption services.

In 2010 the State of Michigan was awarded \$3.5 million dollars by the United States Department of Health and Human Services in recognition of the greatest number of adoptions finalized in our state's history! This effort was in great partnership with DHS and the courts, and largely due to private agency efforts, as more than 70% of this record number of adoptions were completed by private agencies. During 2012, over 80% of children within Michigan's child welfare system with the goal of adoption, were adopted, again with their cases managed by private providers working in shared responsibility with DHS and the Courts.

Private agencies look forward to the opportunity for further collaboration with others to exceed this number of adoptions this year, with the goal of becoming a national model of excellence in child welfare by keeping children safe and moving them to permanency in record time.

A strong partnership between the public and private sectors is critical to this state's achievement of appropriate goals for service. Major challenges for Michigan include meeting the federal Child and Family Services Review standards, implementation of the Child Welfare Improvement Task Force recommendations, and meeting the mandates of the *Dwayne B. v. Snyder* modified settlement agreement.

The consent decree was officially entered into in October of 2008, with modifications made in 2011, and brings focus to a historic moment in the State of Michigan when it was declared that slow means of child welfare change is simply no longer acceptable. The public and private sector must work together aggressively in order to meet the demands of the consent decree. Most importantly, the decree is a blueprint for meaningful child welfare system improvements that have already begun to, and will further result, in better lives for children in Michigan.

These challenges of meeting the decree requirements are amplified by Michigan's economic struggles, which have increased the service need at the same time the state budget deficits have prompted cuts to services, and mandated reform adds cost for private agencies.

Private agencies are equally held accountable for meeting the standards of reform outlined in the consent decree, including reduced caseload sizes, increased supervision of staff, and additional training and service delivery mandates, all components which require financial resources to implement.

The consent decree provides a tremendous opportunity for necessary reform and, of course, requires those who have dedicated their lives to the service of children and families to be a part of the solution.

The legislature can support these efforts through policy and appropriation to insure that both the public and private sectors have the resources critical to implementation, and ultimately, success of meeting the consent decree's requirements.

Federation member agencies are devoted to protecting children and strengthening communities by providing the most cost-effective and quality services possible. It will be critical over the next term that the policy decisions of this committee and the full legislature support creative solutions to issues our state's child welfare system faces.

The private agencies represented through the Michigan Federation for Children and Families are dedicated to working with the Michigan Department of Human Services, Community Health, Courts and the Michigan Legislature to continue improving our system, and making it one that serves children and families with the highest level of quality and respect.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you today, and I am of course more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Advocating for vulnerable children and families since 1969

FULL MEMBERS

Abayomi Community Development Corporation

Adoption Option, Inc.

Bethany Christian Services

D.A. Blodgett-St. John's

Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee Counties

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Catholic Social Services of Oakland County

Child & Family Charities

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Childhelp

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Sunny Crest Youth Ranch

Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan

U.P. KIDS

Vista Maria

Wedgwood Christian Services

Whaley Children's Center

Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption



AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Michigan Association for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Families

Michigan CASA, Inc.

Michigan Home-Based Family Services Association

Michigan State University School of Social Work

Our mission

- To unite private, nonprofit human service providers, advocates, customers, individuals and funders to...
- ◆ influence public policy in support of children, families and individuals' reaching their full potential;
 - ◆ identify, develop and implement efficient and effective services to Michigan's most vulnerable children and families; and
 - ◆ support and enhance the ability of Michigan's private, nonprofit agencies to provide human services.

Human and economic impact and community investment



Each year, Federation member agencies:

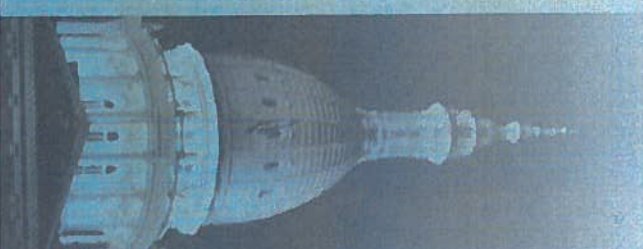
- ◆ Serve the critical needs of nearly **105,000** children and **78,000** adults across the state
- ◆ Provide nearly a **half-billion dollars** worth of services to vulnerable children and families
- ◆ Generate over **\$33 million** in private donations to help offset operating costs
- ◆ Utilize over **\$320 million** in equipment, land and buildings to serve vulnerable children and families
- ◆ Employ over **8,000** individuals across the state, pay salaries totaling more than **\$213 million**
- ◆ Generate over **\$18 million** in payroll taxes and pay over **\$43 million** in fringe benefits
- ◆ Engage nearly **700** community and business leaders as members of agency Boards of Directors
- ◆ Activate more than **30,000** volunteers, who generously devote over **670,000** hours of donated service to children and families

Advocacy impact of our vigilance and focused efforts

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families works tirelessly on behalf of children and families and the private, nonprofit agencies serving Michigan's most vulnerable citizens. The reasons *why* are clear in our mission, but the *ways* in which we influence funding, programs and operations through action are diverse and powerful. Member involvement has been vital to our progress and achievements.

The Federation is at the forefront of action and advocacy as child welfare reform is implemented in Michigan. Our input and feedback to leadership of the Snyder Administration and the Michigan Department of Human Services has been sought out, respected and acted upon. Highlights of the past year's efforts include:

- ◆ Played a major role in providing key information to all stakeholders regarding implementation of the Modified Settlement Agreement, which was reflected in progress reports made to the federal court.
- ◆ On behalf of Federation members, initiated a strong relationship with Chapin Hall in preparation of the work together on the legislatively mandated actuarial rate study with the Department of Human Services.
- ◆ Facilitated and hosted with the Department of Human Services contract negotiations on behalf of private agencies for adoption, foster care and residential treatment.
- ◆ Provided to the Department of Human Services and key legislative leaders comprehensive data and cost analyses that supported the update of contracted services reimbursement rates for adoption, foster care and residential treatment.
- ◆ Advocated successfully to have the reimbursement rates for independent living contracts restored to FY 2010-2011 payment levels.
- ◆ Advocated successfully for payment of millions of dollars owed to member agencies for services provided.
- ◆ Celebrated new efficiencies in state regulation oversight—results of a major overhaul that is greatly reducing the historic overlap of monitoring by Licensing and Contracts offices.
- ◆ Supported passage of Public Acts 225-230, extending foster care eligibility to age 21 in Michigan.
- ◆ Convened faith-based leaders from across the state for the purpose of creating and developing new avenues for recruitment of foster and adoptive families.
- ◆ Hosted Member Day at the Capitol, involving 50+ member representatives advocating at the State Capitol and speaking with Lt. Governor Brian Calley.
- ◆ Served as a conduit for troubleshooting difficulties that agencies experience with navigating and implementing state policies, training requirements, data reporting and payment systems, etc.



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

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1. STEPS IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS: Voluntary Termination of Parental Rights

START HERE:

Is an Indian child involved? **yes** → *ICWA and MIEPPA applies. See Chapter 11.*

Is the termination voluntary? **no** → *Involuntary Termination. See Involuntary Termination flowchart.*

yes →

Voluntary Termination.
Release or consent?

RELEASE.

Voluntarily Terminate During Child Protective Proceedings.

Admit to a ground for termination/enter no contest plea under *Juvenile Code*. (See Section 2.4)

Execute release and termination order under *Adoption Code*. (See Sections 2.1-2.3)

Release Under Adoption Code.
Release of parental rights may only be given to DHS or child placing agency. (See Sections 2.1-2.3)

Release executed. (See Section 2.1)

Termination order issued for parent releasing his/her parental rights.

Other parent's parental rights must be released, voluntarily under *Juvenile Code*, or involuntarily terminated.

Both parents' parental rights are terminated and child is committed to DHS or child placing agency.

DHS or agency formally places child. (See Chapter 6)

UNLESS:

Petition to revoke release is filed before child is placed and DHS or agency joins or acquiesces in petition. (See Section 2.2)

OR

Petition for rehearing is filed within 21 days of termination order. (See Section 7.1)

CONSENT.
Consent to adoption-placement with specific adoptive parent. (See Sections 2.5-2.8) What kind of adoption?

Direct Placement Adoption.
(See Section 8.1)

Custodial parent specifically selects prospective adoptive parent.

Child directly placed temporarily or formally with adoptive parent.

Temporary Placement
(before court approval and parental termination). (See Chapter 5)

Formal Placement
(after court approval and parental termination). (See Chapter 6)

Child temporarily placed with prospective adoptive parent.

Adoptive parent files adoption petition, requesting termination of parental rights and formal placement.

Adoptive parent files adoption petition, requesting termination of parental rights and formal placement, **UNLESS** a petition to revoke temporary placement and return child's return is filed. (See Section 5.5)

Relative Adoption.
(See Section 8.3)

Custodial parent specifically selects relative for formal placement.

Relative files adoption petition, requesting termination of parental rights and formal placement. (See Chapter 6)

Stepparent Adoption.
(See Section 8.2(A))

Custodial parent marries—spouse and custodial parent file adoption petition, requesting termination and formal placement.

Noncustodial parent consents to adoption.

Court formally places child once noncustodial parent's rights are terminated. (See Chapter 6)

UNLESS:

Court formally places child after both parents' parental rights are terminated (after one parent consents, other parent must consent, voluntarily terminate his/her parental rights under *Juvenile Code*, or parental rights are involuntarily terminated), **UNLESS**

Petition to withdraw consent is filed before termination of parental rights.

OR

Petition for rehearing is filed within 21 days of termination order. (See Section 7.1)

2. STEPS IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS: Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights

START HERE:

